GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:8039
ANSWERED ON:17.05.2000
IMPACT OF IT ON SAPTA AND SAFTA
SAHIB SINGH VERMA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the role of IT on SAPTA and SAFTA;

(b) whether IT is likely to bring about changes in the functioning of SAPTA and SAFTA in the coming days; and (

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) Information Technology (IT)`s impact on the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is potentially two-fold -

(i) there is potential for IT exports from India to the South Asian region, both because India has acquired a leading role in the world as a major and reliable supplier of branded, quality software products and services, making the IT sector our fastest growing foreign exchange earner, and because India is seeking greater market access for all its products under SAPTA and bilateral frameworks, and

(ii) increasing use of the Internet and E-commerce will catalyse and facilitate growth in trade at national, bilateral, regional and global levels, and therefore also under SAPTA and SAFTA, when the latter is established.

(b) and (c) A SAARC Seminar on E-commerce is scheduled to be held in October 2000 in Nepal. This Seminar is expected to focus on Information Technology as an enabling tool for trade facilitation in SAARC and thus contribute to intra-regional trade expansion.